



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, April 17, 2012

1. **LOCATION:** Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC

2. **CHAIRPERSON:** Terry Engler

3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

MSC that the minutes of the March 20, 2012 Regular meeting be adopted.

4. **CREDENTIALS:**

The following credentials were received since the last VDLC meeting:(* = recredentialled, A = alternate)

BC Forum

Sandy Bauer

BCGEU Local 1203

Matthew Damario (*)

Connie Harvey

CAW Local 114

Bonnie Hammond (*)

COPE Local 378

Caitlyn Gilroy

Elaine Piper

ILWU Local 500

Jim Galvins

TWU Local 63

Richard Meyer

Al Pasternak

MSC to obligate/seat the delegate(s).

5. **GUEST SPEAKER(S):** **Brother John Fitzpatrick**

Former Secretary Treasurer John Fitzpatrick attended the meeting. Delegates sang “Happy Birthday” and he expressed his continued solidarity and best wishes for the VDLC.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Joey Hartman reported on activities since the March 20th meeting.

Job Action and Bargaining Support

- **Teamsters Local 31 locked-out by Rocky Mountaineers** – Rocky Mountaineer has admitted to cutting down 7 boulevard cherry trees, but denies it was because picketers hang their signs from the trees. The VDLC called the Vancouver City Arborist to urge that the company be fined in addition to replacement costs and labour.

On April 11 the Vancouver Sun ran an article about a couple from England who are forfeiting \$4000 in ticket costs after learning that the trains are behind picket lines, and a few days later the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver kicked out scabs being trained for the next season after Teamsters 31 picketed the hotel.

- **COPE 378 and the TWU Pension Plan** - the dispute continues.
- **BCTF** – teachers will vote on potential actions between April 17 and 19. The union has applied to the LRB to have the mediator Charles Jago removed under “apprehension of bias”.

Metro Vancouver Alliance

Sister Hartman has been re-elected to the MVA board. Labour now represents about 1/3 of the MVA member groups, with the other 2/3 coming from faith and community organizations.

Queen Alexandra School Fundraiser

The March 23 fundraising dinner with Elaine Bernard was a tremendous success, with \$11,000.00 raised for Queen Alexandra Elementary School. This amount will be matched by the Vancouver Sun.

April 28 Day of Mourning

The 2012 ceremony will take place starting at 11:00 am at the New Westminster Quay on Saturday, April 28.

May Day

Plans have changed from holding an event on Saturday, May 5th to a rally and march in the later afternoon on Tuesday, May 1st. It will be co-sponsored by the VDLC, BC Federation of Labour and Occupy Vancouver.

Protein for People

Bonnie Hammond has been contracted to coordinate a community forum Saturday, June 16th with information tables, music and dancing, food and kid stuff. She will be contacting affiliates to participate and demonstrate labour's commitment to our community.

United Way of the Lower Mainland

The 2011/12 campaign fell short of target. The labour committee and board members will continue to promote the value of workplace campaigns, which make up 80% of the funding, with an emphasis on involving unions where certified and emphasising the advocacy model that UWLM has adopted.

Governor General's Leadership Conference

Three VDLC Executive members will be participating in the 15 day conference in May. Paul Sihota, Georgi Bates and Kassandra Cordero are among 250 Canadians selected from business, community and labour organizations across the country.

MP Lobby - Retirement Security for All Canadians

The VDLC is seeking meetings with three Conservative MPs in our region to lobby for improvements to CPP, a reversal of the decision to extend the age of eligibility for GIS and OAS from 65 to 67, and other measures to ensure retirement security for every Canadian. The MPs are Alice Wong (Richmond), Wei Young (Vancouver South) and Kerry-Lynne Findlay (Delta-Richmond East). It is important to have residents from within the MP constituency participate in these meetings, so VDLC delegates who live in one of these ridings are encouraged to sign up.

Adopt-A- Worker Campaign

The members of Steelworkers Local 9490 in Alma Quebec have been locked out by Rio Tinto since January 1st and expect to be on the line for many more months. An Adopt-A-Worker campaign has been established to sustain the picketers and their families. Affiliates are encouraged to make donations directly, or to send contributions through the VDLC.

Piece Rate for Agricultural Workers Frozen

On March 9th the provincial government announced that there will be no change to the exclusion of minimum wage application for hand harvesters. These agricultural workers are paid a piece rate based on the amount they pick, which is typically less than minimum wage at the beginning and end of each harvest season, and for older or slower workers. The Employment Standards Act Coalition, which VDLC belongs to, is advocating for an end to piece rates.

MSC to adopt the report.

7. CORRESPONDENCE: NIL

8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:

SUBJECT: Council of Canadians Membership Renewal

BECAUSE the VDLC has maintained a membership in the Council of Canadians for many years; and

BECAUSE the Council of Canadians continues to represent and advocate for the interests of progressive Canadians on a range of national issues including water rights, public health care, opposing the Keystone XL and Enbridge Gateway pipelines, exposing the implications of CETA and demanding justice regarding federal election “robo-calls”,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL renew its membership in the Council of Canadians for 2012 at a cost of \$100.00.

- b) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Solidarity Notes Labour Choir Fundraising Concert

BECAUSE the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir was founded in 2000 under the VDLC’s sponsorship; and

BECAUSE Solidarity Notes has since performed at countless picket lines, rallies, conferences and protests, sharing their musical inspiration and thoughtful lyrics with thousands of people,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL purchase four tickets for the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir benefit concert on the evening of Sunday, April 22, 2012 titled “Voices Rising in Peace and Solidarity” at a total cost of \$80.00; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL donate the four tickets to the first VDLC delegates who request them.

- c) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Check Your Head Fundraiser

BECAUSE Check Your Head had been educating and activating youth for social and environmental justice for 13 years,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL sponsor two tickets for young people who would otherwise not be able to attend the Check Your Head fundraiser on May 10, 2012 at a total cost of \$75.00.

- d) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: April 28th Day of Mourning for Workers Killed and Injured

BECAUSE 1,014 Canadians lost their lives through preventable workplace accidents and illnesses in 2010; and

BECAUSE the WorkSafe BC accepted claims for this province in 2011 alone reflected 3,200 injuries and 142 fatalities; and

BECAUSE 2012 marks the 20th anniversary of the Nova Scotia Westray Mine disaster, where an underground methane gas explosion killed 26 workers, which led to Bill C-45 which amended the Criminal Code of Canada in 1984 by introducing criminal liability for employer negligence on OH&S issues; and

BECAUSE only two provinces have since laid charges against employers under the revised criminal code, ignoring numerous instances where the law should have been applied; and

BECAUSE COPE 378 is coordinating a campaign for a minute of silence at workplaces around BC to observe the Day of Mourning; and

BECAUSE the VDLC will participate in the April 28, 2012 Day of Mourning ceremonies where the New Westminster Firefighters will donate their time to include a barbeque as part of the event,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL encourage all affiliates to join as we “mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living” by:

- Asking employers to recognize one minute of silence at 11:00 am on Friday, April 27th or other appropriate time
- Participating in the labour sponsored ceremony at New Westminster Quay at 11:00 am on Saturday, April 28th
- Supporting calls for the full application of the Criminal Code in cases where employer negligence results in death or disability; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL donate \$100.00 towards the cost of food for the April 28th barbeque as part of the annual Day of Mourning event.

e) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: SACOM Campaign Against Abuses by Apple Sub-contractors

BECAUSE SACOM (Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour) is seeking endorsements for their letter to Apple regarding labour abuses in their supply chain; and

BECAUSE the labour abuses in Chinese based factories that supply Apple are systemic, and dramatically exposed in the case of sub-contractor, Foxconn, that installed “suicide prevention netting” between its high rise dormitories after 14 workers jumped to their death in 2010 to protest conditions,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse the SACOM open letter to Apple CEO Tim Cook to call for an end to poverty wages, forced overtime, use of involuntary labour, exposure to hazardous conditions, company controlled unions and other systemic labour abuses by their sub-contractors.

- f) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Equality for Women and Rural Workers at Canada Post

BECAUSE rural and suburban mail carriers (RSMCs) have the same kind of work environment or conditions as mail mobile letter carriers and do work that requires the same or an equivalent level of skill, effort and responsibility as these letter carriers, but do not receive the same compensation or treatment; and

BECAUSE federal sector employers like Canada Post have a responsibility to ensure that workers receive equal pay for work of equal value; and

BECAUSE most letter carriers are men who work for Canada Post in urban and suburban areas, while most RSMCs are women who work for Canada Post in rural and suburban areas; and

BECAUSE it is high time that we bridge the rural-urban divide that exists in our country, as well as the significant gender divide that exists at Canada Post,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL send a letter to Canada Post urging the corporation to provide rural and suburban mail carriers with equal pay and the same benefits and rights as letter carriers.

- g) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: May Day

BECAUSE the VDLC is collaborating with the BC Federation of Labour and Occupy Vancouver to have a May Day stage and march on May 1, 2012; and

BECAUSE the first May Day was held on May 1, 1890 in commemoration of Haymarket Martyrs, four who were hand and four others who were imprisoned in Chicago for their involvement in planning a rally on May 4, 1886 to protest police violence and to advocate for the 8 hour day; and

BECAUSE May Day continues to be celebrated in many countries around the world as the “International Day of the Worker”,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL encourage all affiliates to bring their members and banners to the May Day 2012 event.

9. REPORT OF UNIONS:

- a) VSTA – Reported by Sylvia Metzner

Bill 22 was passed on March 16, 2012 and the bill robs teachers of their Charter Rights to free collective bargaining. A mediation process has been imposed with a requirement to incorporate sweeping contract concessions related to seniority, loss of professional

autonomy and a removal of our fair evaluation process. It is a attack on public education which extends oversized and unsupported classroom conditions.

Teachers are voting provincially to adopt an action plan which seeks to pressure government to appoint a truly independent mediator and to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. This second round of legislation enacted against teachers is a concerted effort by the BC Liberals to pay down their deficit. It is clear that they plan to continue in this direction and pressure other public sector unions in the same manner.

b) CUPE Local 116 – Reported by Harry Easton

Local 116 is on strike preparation mode for their 2000 members. The employer is stalling on monetary issues to avoid disruption of classes and exams. More information to follow next month.

c) CUPE Local 391 – Reported by Gary Jarvis

The employer is going against the collective agreement that states where seniority is a factor, the library employees with less seniority should be the ones lose hours. That has not happened. More details of this can be found at our website at www.cupe391.ca.

One library employee has had her hours affected three years in a row. She is a single mother struggling to pay her bills and now does not qualify for benefits as a result of the cuts. There are also other employees struggling to make ends meet.

Against these cuts the library is going forward with the hiring of the director's position which has a salary of \$120,000 with benefits. In addition the local has seen no movement to get the lawyer out of the room. The library has hired a lawyer at a cost of \$400 per hour for bargaining.

d) CUPE Local 1936 – Reported by Michael Lanier

There was a good wrap up to “March is Community Social Services” month with a well attended walk in Victoria.

CUPE Local 1936 and HEU sponsored a free bus to the walk from the lower mainland. Community Social Services Sector has resumed bargaining for a new collective agreement after Easter break.

Our membership is demanding wage increases. Bargaining is slow with concessions on the table for employees.

CUPE Local 1936 will be attending the CUPE BC convention in Victoria next week, then returning to the bargaining table. We are looking forward to the May Day event.

d) ETEA Local 1 - Reported by Charles Boylan

The union reported that King Edward International College, which was certified some time back, just recently voted over 80% to accept a new contract negotiated with the assistance of FPSE staff. The teachers achieved a 5% pay increase, seniority, better holiday provisions and benefits. These teachers compose Local 6 of ETEA. The organizing drive to unionize private schools continues.

The union also took up the call to “adopt a worker” campaign to support the 778 aluminium production workers locked out on December 30, 2011 by Rio Tinto. The union strives to stop the contracting out of unionized plant workers. On March 31, 8000 people demonstrated in Quebec in support for the workers at a rally addressed by many international trade union leaders.

ETEA Local 1 will be at the May Day event proudly showing its banner.

g) HEU – North Shore Community – Reported by Graham O’Neill

There are plans to contract out medical transcriptionists. If this happens personal medical information and printed forms will be completed by private companies.

Bargaining has been going very slowly. Monetary issues are hardly being touched in both facilities and community health sectors. The votes for LPN union representation that BCNU had applied for may indeed not happen for various reasons including the argument that BCNU may have mislead many LPN’s as to what exactly they can do at the bargaining table and suggesting that LPN’s can simply go back to their old union if they are unhappy with BCNU in the first two years.

h) Health Sciences Association – Reported by Agnes Jackman

This is a relatively busy time for HSA and negotiaton contact, annual convention which is being held this week, representing members in our increasing number of Section 54’s in regards to re-organizations and consolidations of services, in addition to attending to the day to day business of the union.

I am very happy to stand here to announce that Rachel Tutte, a long-time HSA activist, has been nominated for a Women of Distinction Award in the Metro Vancouver YWCA’s 2012 awards competition. She has accepted this nomination as a means of advancing attention to the necessary work of the BC Health Coalition, which she tirelessly co-chairs.

Here is my specific ask: Please vote every 24 hours per computer at ywcavan.org/content/connectingthecommunityaward/1147 from Thursday, April 19th until noon on Tuesday, May 22nd in support of Rachel, of whom HSA, the VDLC, the BC Health Coaliton nad the many other organizations that she has supported over many years, are justifiably proud and priviledged to call our own.

i) ILWU Local 500 – Reported by Rob Ashton

Brother Dufrense and Brother Lemonier did not seek re-election at ILWU Canada convention. After decades of fighting for our rights and privileges they will have some time to enjoy them before they retire. On behalf of Local 500 I would like to thank them.

MSC to adopt the reports of unions.

10. REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

1. Strike Solidarity: - Reported by Stephen Von Sychowski

It is almost a year since Rocky Mountaineer locked out Teamsters Local 31 employees. The committee is still meets monthly and continues to show support to brothers and sisters who are currently on strike or locked out.

2. Education – Reported by Joey Hartman

The next Labour Educational will be presented by Leo McGrady on the BC Labour Code on May 12 & 13, 2012 at the Maritime Labour Centre. Registration is \$90.00 and space is limited to 20 participants.

5. Young Workers' - Reported by George Christou & Kassandra Cordero

The Young Workers' committee is working on the Minimum Age Campaign. They need volunteers for a door knocking campaign. The committee is pleased to have raised enough money for six participants to attend the upcoming trip to Cuba.

6. Women's - Reported by Agnes Jackman

A Bread and Roses talk will be presented on April 23 by Joey Hartman on The History of Women in the Vancouver Labour Movement.

MSC to adopt the reports of Committees.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NIL

12. NEW BUSINESS: NIL

13. NOTICE OF MOTION: NIL

14. GOOD AND WELFARE:

- Russ St. Eloi – Pension & Youth Committee
- Kassandra Cordero – CoDevelopment Canada memberships and raffle
- Gary Jarvis – Co-Op Radio Spring Membership Drive
- Peter Marcus – Earth Day
- Paul Sihota - 50/50 proceeds donated back and will go to YW committee to sponsor young workers for The BC Federation of Labour retreat at Camp Jubilee

15. MEETING ADJOURNED: *MSC to adjourn at 9:13 pm*

16. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, [May 15, 2012](#), 7:30 pm, Maritime Labour Centre.

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